Baby Elephant Orphans Get New Home, Families

A baby boy named Kamboyo (kam-BOY-oh) has just arrived at an orphanage in East Africa. Visitors are watching as the "kid" eats, naps, and plays soccer. But Kamboyo and the other kids at this orphanage are not children; they are baby elephants.

Almost 30 years ago, Daphne Sheldrick started an orphanage for baby elephants. Some of those babies' parents had died from disease. Others had been killed by people who hunted their tusks. Sheldrick opened the orphanage because baby

elephants rarely survive in the wild without their mothers. The babies need to drink their mother's milk, or something like it, until they are 2 years old. Sheldrick worked for years to invent milk that is like real elephant's milk -- and the baby elephants drink lots of it.

Baby elephants often miss their elephant families, so the humans and the other elephants at the orphanage

become the babies' new "families." Each elephant has its own room. A keeper stays with the elephant all the time. He even sleeps in the elephant's room! The keepers feed the elephants milk, pet them, cover them with dust so they don't get sunburned, and show them how to play games with other elephants, like kicking a ball.

Kamboyo, the newest elephant at the orphanage, will stay there until he is a year or two old. Then he will be moved to a park where he will begin to learn to live on his own. In time, Kamobyo will return to live in the wild.

MORE FACTS ABOUT ELEPHANTS

- Baby elephants are called *calves*.
- When an elephant wants to get to know you, it holds out its trunk so you can blow in it. That way, the elephant will remember your scent and recognize you later.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Would you want to work as a keeper of baby elephants? What qualities must a good keeper have?

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arrived orphanage tusk disease rarely survive